

So, we have a budget resolution, Mr. President, that contains some strong underlying principles, and I am very, very pleased at that, because I think by maintaining a balanced budget, we can do more than almost any other single thing the Federal Government can do to reduce the cost of borrowing money. That makes going to college, buying a house, buying a car, expanding a business, hiring more employees, all more affordable. That will do more to maintain America's role as the world's great economic superpower than any other single thing we can do, and there is strong bipartisan support in that regard.

But we have these other fundamental differences that I am hopeful can be addressed, at least in part, in the course of this coming debate on the Senate budget resolution. We can create a framework for investment in our communities, investment in our kids, in our schools, in health research, in a more meaningful way than the budget resolution that we currently have on the floor allows.

We can do that. We can sustain Social Security, we can sustain Medicare, we can make other needed investments, while keeping the budget in balance. This is a remarkable point in time, one that many people thought would never occur in our lifetime. This, along with the fall of the Berlin Wall and some other events, are things that many people thought would not happen, but they are on the verge of happening. Now it is our responsibility in this body, the U.S. Senate, to make sure it happens in a responsible, sustainable way and we continue to make the key investments that will create the framework, create the foundation, for our country to prosper and to continue to grow, to create greater opportunity for all of its citizens. Not to guarantee success for anyone—that comes only about through their own labor, their own efforts, and their own talent—but to create the tools, the starting point for every American, regardless of his or her background, as an opportunity to prosper and to succeed.

Mr. President, I want to make one additional comment unrelated directly to the budget resolution but on an issue which does impact our overall economy. I wish to express great, great concern over recent action by our colleagues in the other body who have failed to extend the ethanol fuel tax incentives that the Senate, by a large bipartisan majority, included in the ISTEA legislation.

It appears, at this point, that our colleagues on the other side managed in effect to terminate a critically needed tax provision. This provision will not only allow ethanol fuel usage an opportunity to reach critical mass, a substantial benefit to farmers, but also will help clean our air and make this Nation less reliant on unstable Third World nations as sources of petroleum. At this point, however, it appears that there will not even be an opportunity

for members of the other body to vote for an extension of the ethanol tax incentives.

I am very concerned about this, and it is certainly my hope and expectation that Senate conferees, in the course of negotiating differences between the Senate and the House highway legislation, will give this a very high priority. It is important that we make the proper investments in our Nation's transportation infrastructure.

It is also important that we move forward with a commonsense, cost-efficient strategy for expanding use of clean, American alternative fuels. That can only be done by the conferees on the Senate side looking after the interests of the American people in that regard when the conference committee comes about.

So, Mr. President, this coming week should be tumultuous but very important for the American people as we deal with the fundamental issues in the budget for the coming fiscal year, as well as transportation and fuel strategy into the next century.

With that, Mr. President, I yield back my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). If there is no objection, time will be divided equally between both sides. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAMS. Also, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you very much.

#### SALUTE TO THE 1997-1998 NIT CHAMPIONS, THE MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I just rise for a few moments this afternoon to pay tribute to the University of Minnesota basketball team—the Golden Gophers of Minnesota.

Just a little over a year ago I stood here on the Senate floor saluting the Minnesota Gophers basketball team for their accomplishment of winning the Big Ten championship. That was the team that eventually went on to the NCAA Final Four.

Mr. President, I want to take time to salute an equally deserving team—and that is the 1998 NIT champions, the Minnesota Golden Gophers, who defeated the Penn State Nittany Lions last night by a score of 79-72.

Now, this team overcame the loss of many key players from last year's Final Four squad, but the leadership from seniors Sam Jacobson and Eric Harris, and the excellent play from

Kevin Clark and Quincy Lewis helped the Gophers improve from their slow start this season to finish the year by winning eight of their last nine games.

Every member on the team contributed to the success of this Gopher team, leading to the Gophers' sixth consecutive 20-win season.

Mr. President, Coach Clem Haskins received many coach-of-the-year awards last year. But I must say, the job he did this year is equally impressive and truly deserves recognition today.

So, again, Mr. President, I rise to salute the 1997-1998 NIT champions, the Golden Gophers of the University of Minnesota.

Thank you very much. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, the time utilized by the Senator from Minnesota will be taken from each side equally, and the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I seek recognition as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

#### CHILDREN AND GUNS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the tragedy which occurred in Jonesboro, AR, this week raises many questions. Two come to mind immediately. Why do children kill? I do not know the answer to that. I have heard a variety of opinions from people who suggest that violent television and violent movies are somehow contributing to this. There are others who say, if the children would just pray in school, it would make all the difference in the world. Some look to the families more than the schools; others think the schools have a greater role to play.

We will debate at length, and I am sure many of us will come up with a lot of different explanations as to why children reach that point in their young lives when they would take the life of another.

But the tragedy in Jonesboro raised another question which I think we can address because it is a simpler question. It is a question of, how do children at that young age come to possess lethal weapons? Think about it. An 11-year-old and a 13-year-old with 10 firearms—rifles, shotguns, and handguns, and 3,000 rounds of ammunition—went into the woods behind that middle school, tricked the students out with a fake fire alarm, opened fire and shot off somewhere in the range of 30 to 40 rounds before they were finally stopped.